

Message Text

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, JA

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION TO PRESIDENTIAL VISIT

REFS: (A) TOKYO 13740 (B) TOKYO 13970

SUMMARY: DEVELOPMENTS SINCE LAST REPORT (REF A) SUGGEST THAT WHILE OPPOSITION GROUPS ARE STILL PLANNING TO STAGE MAJOR DEMONSTRATIONS DURING PRESIDENTIAL VISIT, WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF STUDENT ACTIVISTS, THEY ARE LIKELY TO CARRY OUT ONLY NON-VIOLENT ACTIVITIES. SO FAR THEY HAVE HAD LITTLE SUCCESS IN GENERATING NATIONAL MOOD OF OPPOSITION TO VISIT, AND NUCLEAR ISSUE, WHILE STILL MUCH IN EVIDENCE, HAS NOT PRODUCED MAJOR UPSURGE OF PUBLIC SENTIMENT. OPPOSITION PARTIES AND CONSERVATIVES ALIKE SEEM TO BE INCREASINGLY LOOKING BEYOND VISIT TO CONFRONTATION OVER PRIME MINISTER'S CONTINUED TENURE IN OFFICE. RELATED DEVELOPMENTS ADD TO POLITICAL TENSIONS, BUT ALSO TO SOME DEGREE DIVERT ENERGIES OF THOSE OPPOSING PRESIDENT'S TRIP. WE STILL BELIEVE OPPOSITION ACTIVITIES WILL NOT PREVENT ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PRODUCTIVE VISIT. END SUMMARY.

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1. ON OCTOBER 26, JSP PROPAGANDA BUREAU CHIEF AND

INTERNATIONAL BUREAU DEPUTY DIRECTOR TOLD EMBOFF THAT SOCIALISTS DEFINITELY HAVE NO PLANS TO TRY TO PHYSICALLY BLOCK PRESIDENT'S JAPAN VISIT. THEY SAID THAT NUCLEAR CONTROVERSY AND, TO LESSER EXTENT, SEOUL TRIP MADE PROTEST DEMONSTRATIONS MANDATORY FROM JSP POINT OF VIEW; HOWEVER, SUCH DEMONSTRATIONS WOULD BE PEACEFUL. MOREOVER, THEY AGREED, JCP WOULD "FOLLOW JSP LEAD" AND WOULD DO NOTHING TO HARM ASSIDUOUSLY CULTIVATED IMAGE AS PARTY DEVOTED TO NON-VIOLENT CHANGE THROUGH PARLIAMENTARY MEANS. JSP STAFFERS SPECIFICALLY NOTED THAT "THIS IS NOT 1960."

2. NEWSMEN COVERING OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE PROVIDED SIMILAR ASSESSMENTS IN RECENT DAYS. THEY SAY ONLY JCP IS WHOLEHEARTEDLY OPPOSING VISIT AND THAT, WHILE JSP WILL PLAY MAJOR ROLE IN PROTEST ACTIVITIES, INVOLVEMENT DERIVES PRIMARILY FROM LEFT-WING PRESSURES IN PARTY AND FROM NEED TO PROTECT POSITION IN REFORMIST CAMP BY CHALLENGING ALLEGED INTRODUCTION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND, BY EXTENSION, PRESIDENT'S TRIP. ONE NHK REPORTER, IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, QUOTED JSP SEC GEN ISHIBASHI AS TELLING HIM THAT HE HAD NO PERSONAL DESIRE TO OPPOSE VISIT. KOMEITO PARTICIPATION IN PROTEST MOVEMENT APPEARS EVEN MORE CAUTIOUS. SENIOR SOKA GAKKAI STAFF MEMBER TOLD US FRIDAY THAT, WERE IT NOT FOR NUCLEAR ISSUE, KOMEITO WOULD HAVE ACTIVELY WELCOMED VISIT.

3. WHILE SOHYO PLANS HIGH POINT OF AUTUMN STRUGGLES TO COINCIDE WITH PRESIDENT'S STAY IN TOKYO, JSP MEMBERS ADMIT DIFFICULTY IN GENERATING RANK-AND-FILE INTEREST IN OPPOSITION TO PRESIDENT FORD'S VISIT. SIMILARLY, IMF-JC SEC GEN ICHIRO SETO TOLD EMBOFF LAST WEEK THAT WORKERS' ECONOMIC STRUGGLE COULD NOT SUCCESSFULLY BE LINKED TO VISIT. WHILE UNIONISTS WILL CONDUCT STRIKES AND MARCH IN DEMONSTRATION PARADES, REGARDLESS OF HOW SUCH ACTIVITIES INTERPRETED BY OPPOSITION PARTIES AND PRESS, FOR MOST WORKERS PRESIDENT'S VISIT IS ADD-ON ISSUE; THEIR REAL CONCERN IS INFLATION.

4. DESPITE LEFT-WING EFFORTS TO CREATE ATMOSPHERE OF NATIONAL OPPOSITION TO PRESIDENTIAL VISIT, WITH EMPHASIS ON NUCLEAR QUESTION, THERE HAS BEEN NO DISCERNIBLE UPSURGE OF CONFIDENTIAL

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POPULAR SENTIMENT IN RECENT WEEKS. WHILE NUCLEAR ISSUE IS VERY REAL ONE AND MANY JAPANESE ARE VERY MUCH CONCERNED (TO SOME EXTENT REFLECTED IN ANTI-WAR DAY TURNOUT), EMBASSY CONTACTS CONTINUE TO TELL US THAT SERIES OF CHARGES STEMMING FROM LAROCQUE STATEMENTS SIMPLY CONFIRMED WHAT THEY ALREADY SUSPECTED. MOREOVER, PASSAGE OF TIME AND NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN POLITICAL ARENA (TANAKA'S LATEST TROUBLES) APPEAR TO HAVE CHECKED WHAT SOME OBSERVERS EXPECTED TO BE MOUNTING WAVE

OF POPULAR SENTIMENT. FOR WHATEVER REASONS, ANTI-AMERICAN, ANTI-FORD REACTION OF MAJOR PROPORTION DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE SET IN. SUPPORT FOR THIS ASSERTION IS FOUND IN FACT THAT, APART FROM TURNOUT PRODUCED BY ALL-OUT ANTI-WAR DAY EFFORT, NUMBER OF DEMO PARTICIPANTS IN TOKYO, YOKOSUKA AND ELSEWHERE IN JAPAN HAS BEEN MODEST AND OFTEN MEAGER. THERE HAVE, SO FAR, BEEN NO SIGNIFICANT DEMOS AT EMBASSY.

5. ADDITIONAL FACTOR TO BE KEPT IN MIND IS THAT FOR OPPOSITION PARTIES AND CONSERVATIVES ALIKE, PROTEST AGAINST PRESIDENT AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS IS ONLY PRELUDE TO MAIN POLITICAL CONTEST CENTERING ON EFFORT TO FORCE PRIME MINISTER TANAKA FROM OFFICE (REF B). OUTPOURING OF COMMENT AND SPECULATION ON TANAKA'S POLITICAL FUTURE IN LAST FEW DAYS HAS OVERSHADOWED ALL OTHER ISSUES (INCLUDING VISIT AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS) AND UNDERSCORED FACT JAPANESE POLITICIANS' ATTENTION FOCUSED BEYOND PRESIDENT'S TRIP. TO EXTENT RELATED MANEUVERS MAY FURTHER HEAT UP POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE DURING PRESIDENT'S TOKYO STAY AND TO EXTENT LEFT WILL SEEK TO DEPICT VISIT AS EFFORT TO SHORE UP FALTERING TANAKA REGIME, DOMESTIC POLITICAL BATTLE COULD HAVE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON PRESIDENT'S TRIP. AT SAME TIME, HOWEVER, PREPARATIONS FOR COMING DIET CONFRONTATION ALSO FORCE OPPOSITION PARTIES TO DIVERT EFFORTS FROM ANTI-VISIT CAMPAIGN.

6. WHILE GIVING DAILY ATTENTION TO SUCCESSION OF CHARGES, OFTEN FUELED BY U.S. CORRESPONDENTS, RE NUCLEAR WEAPONS, NEWSPAPERS HAVE CONTINUED TO AVOID MAKING EDITORIAL JUDGMENTS ABOUT VISIT. THIS DEARTH OF PRESS COMMENT HAS, OF COURSE, HARDLY HELPED FOSTER POSITIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR VISIT. AT SAME TIME, PAPERS HAVE NOT QUESTIONED ADVISABILITY OF PRESIDENT'S TRIP AND SEEM LIKELY TO AVOID CRITICAL STAND. WHETHER THEY WILL REITERATE EARLY STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT REMAINS CONFIDENTIAL

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TO BE SEEN.

7. THERE ARE STILL NO SIGNS THAT DISPARATE RADICAL STUDENT GROUPS WILL BE ABLE TO JOIN FORCES FOR ANY KIND OF COORDINATED EFFORT DURING PRESIDENTIAL VISIT. INDIVIDUALLY OR COLLECTIVELY, OF COURSE, THEY CONTINUE TO CONSTITUTE MAJOR POTENTIAL SOURCE OF VIOLENCE. POLICE ARE CAREFULLY MONITORING THEIR ACTIVITIES AND, AS WITH DEMONSTRATIONS GENERALLY, ARE CONFIDENT OF THEIR ABILITY TO COPE WITH STUDENT PROTESTS.

8. IN SUME, WHILE PRESIDENT WILL BE VISITING JAPAN AT TIME OF UNUSUAL POLITICAL TENSION, NO GROUNDSWELL OF POPULAR PROTEST AGAINST HIS TRIP HAS DEVELOPED. WE CONTINUE TO EXPECT LARGE DEMONSTRATIONS TO BE MOUNTED BY OPPOSITION PARTIES AND ALLIED ORGANIZATIONS, BUT AS OF END OF OCTOBER, STILL BELIEVE

THEY WILL NOT PREVENT ACCOMPLISHMENT OF PRODUCTIVE VISIT.
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